

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) A bleed valve for the fuel tank of a vehicle, said bleed valve comprising:

a cylindrical housing ~~with having~~ a housing base, the housing being intended for attachment to a wall of the fuel tank, said housing having a topside with an outlet orifice and a longitudinal axis;

at least one inlet orifice for communicating with the head space of the fuel tank;

a floating body within the housing;

a spring supporting the floating body on the housing base, said floating body being moveable longitudinally within the housing;

a valve seat for the outlet orifice defined by a rim ~~surrounding the outlet orifice;~~

a sealing element moveable according to movement of the floating body between a position which closes the outlet orifice and a position which opens the outlet orifice, said sealing element comprising a projection forming a fluid conduit extending from said sealing element towards said floating body, said fluid conduit having an open end facing said floating body;

~~a counter surface connected to said floating element, wherein in the closed position of the valve, the sealing element is fixed between the valve seat and said counter surface; and~~

a guide mandrel fixedly attached to an end of the floating body facing said valve seat for movement with said floating body, said guide mandrel being configured to close said fluid conduit opening when said valve is in the closed position, said sealing element fluid conduit extending towards said mandrel such that said mandrel is capable of

sealingly engaging said open end of said fluid conduit and urging said sealing element against said valve seat when said valve is in the closed position;

a support disk connected to said floating body, the support disk being connected to the floating body, the support disk having an integral annular flange and a counter surface facing said sealing element such that in the closed position of the bleed valve the sealing element is fixed between the valve seat and the counter surface, said support disk being mounted for pivotal movement about mutually perpendicular pivot axes; and

a pair of mutually diametrically opposed axially extending retainer elements attached to the floating body, each retainer element extending upwardly from the floating body and terminating in an abutment section that extends over said annular flange for engagement therewith, and wherein said retainer elements are differently dimensioned with respect to one another such that the abutment sections are at different elevations with respect to the annular flange thereby causing one of said mutually perpendicular pivot axes to be inclined relative to said longitudinal axis of the housing as said retainer elements engage said annular flange when said valve moves from the closed position to the open position, the support disk being mounted for pivotal movement about mutually perpendicular pivot axes wherein one of the pivot axes is inclined with respect to the longitudinal axes of the housing, the support disk further including a pair of mutually diametrically opposed axially extending retainer elements attached to the floating body, wherein said support disk includes an integrally formed annular flange, each retainer element being positioned for engagement over said annular flange, said axial extensions being differently dimensioned in the direction extending upwardly from the floating body, each said axial extension terminating in a positive locking abutment extending over said annular flange, said differing elevations of the abutment sections abutments together

establishing said pivot axis which is inclined with respect to the longitudinal axis of the cylindrical housing.

12. (previously presented) A bleed valve according to claim 11, wherein the valve seat extends radially in relation to the longitudinal axis of the cylindrical housing.

13. (previously presented) A bleed valve according to claim 11, wherein the valve seat extends perpendicularly with respect to the longitudinal axis of the housing.

14. (currently amended) A bleed valve according to claim 11, wherein the sealing element is formed as a sealing disk having the fluid conduit forming projection integrally formed therewith, said support disk has a centrally positioned opening through which said fluid conduit extends to said guide mandrel, on which in a central region a tubular, fluid-conveying projection is integrally formed, a cut-out in the support disk, the conveying projection extending through said cut-out integrally formed on the facing end side of the floating body, a said guide mandrel is conically shaped and integrally formed on the facing end side of the floating body, and said guide mandrel protruding protrudes from said floating body and sealingly closing closes the facing fluid conduit opening of the projection when the valve is in the closed position.

15. (previously presented) A bleed valve according to claim 11, further including a ring-like arrangement of support fingers facing towards the support disk, the fingers being spaced apart in the peripheral direction and having radially inwardly facing surfaces for exerting a radial guiding effect upon a facing surface of the support disc.

16. (currently amended) A bleed valve according to claim 12, wherein the sealing element comprises a sealing disk having said fluid conduit projecting centrally therefrom, a centrally positioned tubular, fluid-conveying projection which extends through the support disk and a and said guide mandrel is conically shaped and which protrudes from said floating body and which to sealingly close[[s]] the facing fluid conduit opening of the projection when the valve is in the closed position.

17. (currently amended) A bleed valve according to claim 13, wherein the sealing element comprises a sealing disk having said fluid conduit projecting centrally therefrom, a centrally positioned tubular, fluid-conveying projection which extends through the support disk and a and said guide mandrel is conically shaped and which protrudes from said floating body and which to sealingly closes the facing fluid conduit opening of the projection when the valve is in the closed position.

18. (previously presented) A bleed valve according to claim 12 further including a ring-like arrangement of support fingers facing towards the support disk, the fingers being spaced apart in the peripheral direction and having radially inwardly facing surfaces for exerting a radial guiding effect upon a facing inner surface of the support disk.

19. (previously presented) A bleed valve according to claim 13 further including a ring-like arrangement of support fingers facing towards the support disk, the fingers being spaced apart in the peripheral direction and having radially outwardly facing surfaces for exerting a radial guiding effect upon a facing inner surface of the support disk.

20. (currently amended) A bleed valve according to claim 14, characterized in that wherein formed on the side of the floating body facing towards the support disc is a ring-

like arrangement of support fingers which are spaced apart in the peripheral direction and whose radial outer side is intended and arranged for exerting a radial guiding effect upon a facing inner surface of the support disc.

21. (new) A bleed valve for the fuel tank of a vehicle, said bleed valve having an open and closed position, said bleed valve comprising:

a cylindrical housing attachable to the wall of the fuel tank, said housing having a base, a topside, an outlet orifice, and a longitudinal axis therethrough;

at least one inlet orifice capable of fluid communication with the head space of the fuel tank;

a floating body moveable longitudinally within said housing to close and open said bleed valve;

a spring supporting the floating body;

a valve seat for the outlet orifice defined by an opening in fluid communication with said outlet orifice;

a sealing element moveable in response to movement of said floating body between a position which closes the outlet orifice and a position which opens the outlet orifice, said sealing element having a fluid conduit formed within a projection extending from said sealing element towards said floating body, said fluid conduit having an open end facing said floating body;

a guide mandrel attached to an end of the floating body facing said valve seat for movement with said floating body, said guide mandrel being configured to close said fluid conduit opening when said valve is in the closed position, said sealing element fluid conduit extending towards said mandrel such that said mandrel is capable of sealingly

engaging said open end of said fluid conduit and urging said sealing element against said valve seat when said valve is in the closed position;

a support disc connected to said floating body, the support disc having an annular flange and an opening formed therein, said support disk being mounted for pivotal movement about mutually perpendicular pivot axes, said projection of said sealing element extending through said support disc opening to said mandrel; and

a pair of mutually diametrically opposed retainer elements attached to the floating body for movement therewith, each retainer element extending axially from the floating body and terminating in an abutment section that extends over said annular flange to be engageable therewith, wherein said abutment sections are at different elevations with respect to the annular flange thereby causing one of said mutually perpendicular pivot axes to be inclined relative to said longitudinal axis of the housing when said retainer elements engage said annular flange as said valve moves from the closed position to the open position, said differing elevations of the abutments establishing said inclined pivot axis which is inclined with respect to the longitudinal axis of the cylindrical housing.